

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 754

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 1515

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FFOR, JM, US

SUBJECT: DUDLEY THOMPSON CHARGES JAMAICA TARGET FOR HYSTERIA
AND SMEAR

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 1187

1. ADDRESSING THE HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE
APRIL 8, MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DUDLEY THOMPSON
TOLD THE JAMAICAN DIPLOMATS THAT JAMAICA'S FORMATION OF
NEW FRIENDSHIPS AS THE COUNTRY SEEKS TO DIVERSIFY ITS
EXTERNAL RELATIONS HAS BEEN GREETED WITH "MANIFESTATIONS
OF AN ALMOST HYSTERICAL PARANOIA." CERTAIN FOREIGN
MEDIA IN PARTICULAR HAD MADE JAMAICA THE TARGET FOR
HYSTERIA AND SMEAR AND "WHAT I AM CONVINCED ARE DE-
LIBERATE ATTEMPTS BY EXTERNAL FORCES THROUGH THE
MEDIUM OF LOCAL SITUATIONS TO DESTABILIZE THE ECONOMY
OF JAMAICA."

2. JAMAICA'S MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE, THE COUNTRY'S
POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN, ITS
COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A PROGRAM BASED
ON DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM WERE VIEWED WITH DISFAVOR,
SAID THE MINISTER.

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3. HE REFERRED, WITHOUT ELABORATION, TO WHAT HE

CALLED "INSIDIOUS APPROACHES" MADE TO HEADS OF MISSIONS AND THEIR STAFF IN COUNTRIES IN WHICH THEY WORKED, APPROACHES WHICH WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE THEM TO BE DISLOYAL TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

4. DURING TELEPHONE CALL ON LOS TO F.M. ON APRIL 9, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THOMPSON'S REMARKS TO THE DIPLOMATS AND EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS WITH THE WAY THE WORD "DESTABILIZATION" WAS BEING THROWN OUT. THOMPSON REPLIED THAT HE IS CONVINCED THERE IS A SMEAR CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY AGAINST JAMAICA. HE CITED A RECENT WASHINGTON POST STORY WHICH QUOTED HIM AS SAYING THERE WERE 600 CUBANS IN THE COUNTRY. THE PAPER DELIBERATELY HAD DOUBLED THE FIGURE HE HAD GIVEN. HE HAD PLAYED BACK HIS TAPE OF THE CONVERSATION WITH THE REPORTER AND IT BORE HIM OUT.

5. THOMPSON FELT A RECENT MIAMI HERALD STORY CITING OFFICIAL JAMAICAN SOURCES THAT CASTRO WOULD VISIT JAMAICA FOR LABOR DAY WAS A DISTORTION, AND EQUALLY PART OF SMEAR CAMPAIGN. HE COULD NOT HELP BUT FEEL THAT THE SPATE OF NEGATIVE STORIES HAD BEEN INSPIRED, AND MENTIONED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DENIAL FROM OFFICIAL U.S. SOURCES OF THE RESTON ARTICLE (REFTEL).

6. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD THOMPSON TO RELAX AND STOP OVER-INTERPRETING THE RECENT PRESS ATTENTION. THE MEDIA HAVE INTENSE INTEREST IN CASTRO AND CUBA, PARTICULARLY SINCE ANGOLA, AND THOUGH JAMAICA MAY BE ONLY AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER, IT WILL RECEIVE INCREASING COVERAGE AS ITS CONTACTS WITH CUBA INCREASE.

7. THE AMBASSADOR PROMISED TO PASS ALONG THOMPSON'S CONCERN AND CONCLUDED THAT WHILE THE FREE PRESS WHICH BOUT OUR COUNTRIES ENJOYED WAS NOT ALWAYS TOTALLY ACCURATE AND GAVE US OCCASSIONAL PAIN, IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO OUR DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE. THOMPSON QUICKLY AGREED, "JAMAICA IS ONE OF THE FEW DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES -- ONE WITH A TRULY FREE PRESS."

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